

**From:** Morning Consult  
**To:** [james\\_cason@ios.doi.gov](mailto:james_cason@ios.doi.gov); [The Morning Consult](#)  
**Subject:** Morning Consult Washington, Presented by the Electronic Payments Coalition: White House to Issue Guidance on Military Transgender Ban  
**Date:** Thursday, August 24, 2017 9:00:53 AM

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By [Eli Yokley](#)

## Top Stories

- The White House is expected to issue guidance to the Defense Department in the coming days regarding how to implement President Donald Trump's proposed ban on transgender people in the military. An internal memo directs the Pentagon to stop admitting transgender people and to stop paying for medical treatment related to gender transitions. ([The Wall Street Journal](#))
- Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) pushed back on media reports of a divide between him and Trump. He issued a statement saying

they're both "committed to advancing our shared agenda together." ([The Hill](#))

- A New Jersey judge denied requests by Democratic Sen. Robert Menendez's lawyers to either delay his federal corruption trial or explain to a jury his absence if it interferes with Senate votes. Oral arguments are scheduled for Sept. 6, the day after Congress returns from its August recess. ([The New York Times](#))
- House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) visited an Intel facility in Oregon to tout the House GOP's tax plan. He said he was "very confident" lawmakers would pass the proposal before the end of the year. ([CNBC](#))

## Chart Review

[\*\*In global popularity contest, U.S. and China - not Russia - vie for first\*\*](#)

Pew Research Center

## **Events Calendar (All Times Local)**

### **THURSDAY**

Heritage Foundation event: Protecting Public Employees' First Amendment Rights

12 p.m.

### **FRIDAY**

No events scheduled



## General

[\*\*Trump blames GOP leaders for debt ceiling 'mess'\*\*](#)

**Rebecca Savransky, The Hill**

President Trump said Thursday he asked GOP leaders in Congress to tie legislation raising the debt ceiling to a Veterans Affairs bill, and that their failure has led to a political mess surrounding the issues. Trump targeted Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) in the tweet.

## **Coal, Nuclear Power Would Benefit From Energy Department's Power Grid Study**

**Jeff Brady, NPR News**

The U.S. power grid could become less reliable if too much electricity comes from renewable energy and natural gas, according to a study from the Department of Energy. But not everyone is buying it.

## **With Chinese Support, Pakistan Can Ignore Trump on Afghanistan**

**Iain Marlow and Ismail Dilawar, Bloomberg**

A key plank of U.S. President Donald Trump's new strategy to turn around the 16-year conflict in Afghanistan will probably falter for a reason few of his voters would realize: China. On Monday, Trump outlined an open-ended commitment to the conflict in Afghanistan that pledged more troops and diplomatic outreach to the Taliban.

## **White nationalists may hold 'flash' rally in Lexington, making counter-protests harder**

**Bill Estep and Beth Musgrave, The Lexington Herald-Leader**

White nationalist groups may hold a flash demonstration in Lexington to protest moving two Confederate statues from the lawn of the former Fayette County courthouse instead of a publicly-announced rally, according to an organizer. Matthew Heimbach, chairman of a white-nationalist group called the Traditionalist Worker Party, told the Herald-Leader last week that his group and others were planning a rally in Lexington to oppose the removal of statues in downtown Lexington.

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## **Presidential**

### **White House Sets Rules for Military Transgender Ban**

**Gordon Lubold, The Wall Street Journal**

The White House is expected to send guidance to the Pentagon in coming days on how to implement a new administration ban on transgender people in the military, issuing a policy that will allow Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to consider a service member's ability to deploy in deciding whether to kick them out of the military. The White House memo also directs the Pentagon to deny

admittance to transgender individuals and to stop spending on medical treatment regimens for those currently serving, according to U.S. officials familiar with the document.

**Pence: U.S. to use 'economic and diplomatic power' to restore democracy in Venezuela**

**Sergio Bustos, Politico**

Vice President Mike Pence made a quick trip Wednesday afternoon to this Miami suburb, home to the nation's largest Venezuelan community, to reinforce and reiterate the Trump administration's commitment and support for those fighting against the authoritarian government of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. "The U.S will continue to bring the full measure of U.S. economic and diplomatic power to bear until democracy is restored in Venezuela," Pence told a cheering crowd of hundreds of people at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

**Rabbis Protest Trump's Comments by Boycotting Conference Call**  
**Alexander Burns, The New York Times**

For years, the presidential conference calls were a nonpartisan holiday tradition: President Barack Obama would speak by phone with hundreds of rabbis in advance of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, in what participants described as a meeting of minds, largely free of raw politics. But that emerging tradition was thrown into jeopardy on Wednesday, in a sign of the still-intensifying backlash against President Trump's response to the violence this month in Charlottesville, Va.

**Trump's whiplash: Three personas in three speeches, but the same president**

**Philip Rucker, The Washington Post**

In the span of 48 hours this week, President Trump has boomeranged among three roles: the commander in chief, the divider and the uniter. Like a contestant on one of his reality TV shows, Trump has taken on contrasting personas, showcasing divergent traits with flourishes seemingly to survive another day of his beleaguered presidency.

**Again breaking ground, Trump takes the permanent campaign to new heights**

**Mark Z. Barabak, The Los Angeles Times**

The permanent campaign has been a fixture of the modern presidency for more than a generation - ever since Jimmy Carter, eyeing reelection, shucked his suit coat in favor of a more casual cardigan. But President Trump, in yet another break with convention, has scaled new heights when it comes to politicizing and, especially, personalizing the workings of the White House.

### **General Kelly Commands the White House, But He Can't Control Trump**

**Margaret Talev and Jennifer Jacobs, Bloomberg**

Since retired Marine Corps General John Kelly started as White House chief of staff last month, President Donald Trump has added a routine caveat before approving proposals advisers place before him: Check with "The General" before moving ahead. It's a marked departure from Trump's instinct to manage around Kelly's predecessor, Reince Priebus.

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## **Senate**

### **McConnell pushes back on reports of rift with Trump: We have shared agenda**

**Jordain Carney, The Hill**

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is pushing back against reports of a rift with President Trump, saying Wednesday he and the president have shared priorities. "We have a lot of work ahead of us, and we are committed to advancing our shared agenda together and anyone who suggests otherwise is clearly not part of the conversation," McConnell said in a statement.

### **Menendez Is Denied Reprieve From Corruption Trial to Cast Senate Votes**

**Nick Corasaniti, The New York Times**

When the 115th Congress returns to Washington on Sept. 5, Senator Robert Menendez will likely be absent: His federal corruption trial is set to begin here the following day. But when the Senate moves to vote on major bills during the fall - including on the debt ceiling, his plan to overhaul the National Flood Insurance Program, even an unpredictable major foreign policy decision -

Senator Menendez will be caught between his desire to remain in front of jurors and his congressional obligation to fight for his constituents.

**Rubio laments congressional failures, says white supremacists 'threat' to GOP**

**Matt Dixon, Politico**

Sen. Marco Rubio laid out what he sees as congressional failures and where he thinks the Republican Party should go during a campaign-style speech Tuesday night before the Seminole County Republican Party. The Miami Republican says high profile legislative failures, including the failed repeal of Obamacare, are bad for the future of the party, which made some high-profile promises during the 2016 campaign cycle.

**McCaskill Pushes Pentagon for Answers on Improper Payments**

**John M. Donnelly, Roll Call**

Sen. Claire McCaskill wants some answers from Defense Secretary James Mattis on the Pentagon's efforts to curb so-called improper payments to contractors and individuals. McCaskill sent Mattis a letter Wednesday seeking an update on reports of inadequate Pentagon compliance with a law that mandates monitoring overpayments and underpayments, which totaled \$1.2 trillion across the federal government between 2003 and 2016, according to the Government Accountability Office.

**Democrats Hope for 'Perfect Storm' in Alabama Senate Race**

**Bridget Bowman, Roll Call**

As Republicans gear up for a grueling primary runoff in the Alabama special election Senate race, Democratic candidate Doug Jones has the race to himself. And Democrats see Jones as their best hope for victory in a ruby-red state.

**Meet The Conservative Trying To Unseat Joe Manchin And Redden The Senate In 2018**

**Jayne Metzgar, The Federalist**

It's a remarkable quirk of our federal republic that U.S. policy often hinges on local races. Regional personalities and issues, emerging from places coastal elites have never visited, will play a significant role in next year's midterm elections-most crucially, the battle for the U.S. Senate.

## House

### [Paul Ryan again pushes for a simpler tax code](#)

**CNBC**

House Speaker Paul Ryan touted Republicans' tax reform plan Wednesday after touring an Intel facility in Oregon. Ryan cast the coming GOP proposal as essential to simplifying the tax code and allowing the U.S. economy and its companies to thrive.

### [Dems to Trump: We won't yield on wall funding](#)

**Rafael Bernal, The Hill**

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) warned Democrats would hold fast to their pledge to oppose border wall funding after President Trump threatened a government shutdown over the issue. "President Trump's multi-billion dollar border wall boondoggle is strongly opposed by Democrats and many Republicans," she said.

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## States

### [Judge rejects revised Texas voter ID law](#)

**Josh Gerstein, Politico**

A federal judge has ruled that changes Texas made to its voter identification law earlier this year did not go far enough to render the state's policy constitutional. U.S. District Court Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos said the new legislation, passed in May and signed in August by Gov. Greg Abbott, failed to address all the aspects of the 2011 law that the judge found intentionally discriminated against African Americans and Latinos.

### [The Democrat running for Va. governor wants Confederate monuments to come down. Republicans said he has turned his back on 'heritage.'](#)

**Laura Vozzella and Fenit Nirappil, The Washington Post**

The Republican Party of Virginia said Wednesday that Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam, whose ancestors once owned slaves and fought in the Civil War, had "turned his back on his own family's heritage" by calling for the removal of

Confederate monuments. The accusation drew swift condemnation from Democrats and some Republicans, who said it amounted to calling Northam a "race traitor."

**[Gillespie mocks ESPN for pulling Robert Lee from Virginia game](#)**  
**Diamond Naga Siu, Politico**

Ed Gillespie, the Republican nominee for Virginia governor, mocked ESPN on Wednesday for pulling sportscaster Robert Lee from the University of Virginia's first home football game in hopes of avoiding awkward comparisons to the Confederate general of the same name. Charlottesville, where the university is located, drew a spotlight earlier this month when white supremacist and neo-Nazi marchers gathered there to protest the planned removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee.

**[Parts of National Monument in Utah May Lose Federal Protection](#)**  
**Julie Turkewitz and Lisa Friedman, The New York Times**

Parts of this sprawling region of red-rock canyons, towering mesas and ancient Native American sites in southeastern Utah could lose their strict federal protection as a national monument, under a recommendation that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is expected to issue on Thursday. Shrinking the Bears Ears National Monument and reopening much of the land for possible mining and drilling would be widely seen as a direct blow to former President Barack Obama's environmental legacy, and the first major test of a century-old conservation law.

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## **Advocacy**

**[AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson tells employees to call Congress to push for tax reform](#)**

**Melissa Repko, The Dallas Morning News**

AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson threw his weight behind a congressional proposal to slash corporate taxes and rewrite the nation's tax code Wednesday, urging the telecom company's employees to call their representatives. Stephenson has long argued that lower corporate taxes would free up money for AT&T and other companies to boost job creation and capital investment.

**[Violence in Charlottesville leads to soul-searching at ACLU](#)**

## **Tom Hays and Larry Neumesiter, The Associated Press**

Faced with an angry backlash for defending white supremacists' right to march in Charlottesville, the American Civil Liberties Union is confronting a feeling among some of its members that was once considered heresy: Maybe some speech isn't worth defending. Cracks in the ACLU's strict defense of the First Amendment no matter how offensive the speech opened from the moment a counter-protester was killed during the rally in Virginia.

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### **A Message from the Electronic Payments Coalition:**

Taking a road trip to escape the heat this summer? Watch out for skimmers at gas stations, which can steal your card data—including PINs—and cause you a headache during your vacation. [Learn more](#) from EPC.

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## **Opinions, Editorials and Perspectives**

### **Beating His Own Head Against the Wall**

**The Editorial Board, The Wall Street Journal**

Donald Trump is sore at Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell for saying recently that the President sometimes has "excessive expectations" for Congress. But Mr. Trump proved Mr. McConnell right Tuesday when he told a rally in Phoenix that he's willing to shut down the federal government this autumn to get funding for his border wall with Mexico.

### **The President Turns on His Own**

**The Editorial Board, The New York Times**

On a baking-hot evening in Phoenix on Tuesday, in another of the campaign-style rallies in red states that seem to give him strength when he runs into trouble in Washington, President Trump trotted out the usual enemies, the malefactors in the "very dishonest media" and the "anarchists" of the left to whom that very same media had paid too little attention. But this time he gave equal billing to his fellow Republicans in Congress - the people he will surely need if he hopes to deliver on infrastructure or anything else of value to the working-class Americans who elected him.

### **Has the Navy Reached Its Breaking Point?**

## **Seth Cropsey, The Wall Street Journal**

Sunrise in Singapore on Aug. 20 came at 7:03. Nearly an hour and a half earlier, the guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain -named for Sen. John McCain's father and grandfather, both admirals-collided with a Liberian-flagged tanker ship near the heavily traveled Strait of Malacca.

## **Rating Change: Flake More Vulnerable in Arizona**

### **Nathan Gonzales, Roll Call**

The acrimony between President Donald Trump and Arizona Republican Jeff Flake, which is already making the senator's re-election bid more challenging, should only intensify during the president's rally in Phoenix on Tuesday night. Flake is known as a Trump opponent, which could make him vulnerable in the primary.

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## **A Message from the Electronic Payments Coalition:**

\$2 BILLION! That's how much theft from gas station skimmers cost consumers in 2014. The Electronic Payments Coalition (EPC) has [tips to help you protect yourself](#) when you're filling up at home or traveling far and wide this summer.

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## **Research Reports and Polling**

### **DDHQ / Opinion Savvy Poll of #ALSen Runoff: Moore 50.3% Strange 32.2%**

#### **Brandon Finnigan, Decision Desk**

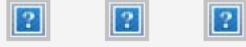
Decision Desk HQ sponsored an Opinion Savvy poll of likely voters in Alabama for the upcoming Senate special election's Republican primary runoff. Voters were contacted by landline (IVR) and cell phone (push notification and web-based survey), and the sample was weighted for age, race, gender and region.

### **A Lost Decade in Higher Education Funding State Cuts Have Driven Up Tuition and Reduced Quality**

#### **Michael Mitchell et al., Center on Budget and Policy Priorities**

A decade since the Great Recession hit, state spending on public colleges and universities remains well below historic levels, despite recent increases. Overall

state funding for public two- and four-year colleges in the 2017 school year (that is, the school year ending in 2017) was nearly \$9 billion below its 2008 level, after adjusting for inflation.



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